stream.

9. A method according to claim 1, wherein the following steps
    are performed before the step of coding the spectral val-
    ues [for coding an audio signal to obtain a coded bit
    stream, comprising the following steps:

    transforming discrete-time samples of the audio signal
    into the frequency domain to obtain spectral values which
    represent the audio signal;]

    grouping the spectral values into adjacent spectral sec-
    tions, each spectral section having at least one spectral
    value;

    assigning at least two different code tables from a prede-
    termined number of code tables to two different spectral
    sections, a spectral section having assigned to it that
    code table which is best suited for coding the spectral
    values in the spectral section;

    wherein, in the step of coding, [coding] the spectral val-
    ues from the spectral sections are coded with the code ta-
    ble which is assigned to the corresponding spectral sec-
    tion[, the length of a code word which is assigned to a
    spectral value being in general that much shorter the
    higher the probability of occurrence of the spectral value
    is];

    wherein, in the step of specifying, [specifying] a raster
    is specified for the coded bit stream such that the raster
    has at least two groups of raster points [(10, 12, 14 and
    14, 16, 18)], such that the raster points of each group
    are spaced equidistantly from one another and such that
    the raster point distance [(D1 or D2)] of each group de-

pends on an appropriate code table from among the at least two different code tables[; and

positioning priority code words, which represent certain spectral values which are psychoacoustically important compared to other spectral values, in the raster so that the start of each priority code word of each code table coincides with a raster point (10, 12, 14 or 14, 16, 18) in the corresponding group of raster points].

10. A method according to claim 9, wherein, in the step of de-fining priority code words, [the following step is per-formed before step (f):

defining] a code word is defined to be a priority code word when an indicator, which depends on the code table from which the code word originates, indicates priority.

11. A method according to claim 10,

wherein each code table has a maximum absolute value for a spectral value which is to be coded; and

wherein the indicator indicates the highest priority when the code table on which the indicator depends has the highest absolute value of all the code tables.

12. A method according to [one of the claims 9 to 11] claim 9,

wherein each code table has a maximum absolute value for a spectral value which is to be coded; and

wherein a plurality of code tables is used, where there is an indicator for each table, where the indicator is deter-mined by the highest absolute value of the respective ta-

ble and where the indicator for a table with a greater
maximum absolute value indicates a higher priority for a
code word from the table than does an indicator for an-
other table with a smaller maximum absolute value.

13. A method according to [one of the claims 9 to 12] claim 9,
wherein the raster point distance (D1, D2) of each group
of raster points is smaller than, equal to or greater than
the length of the longest code word of the corresponding
code table.

14. A method according to [one of the claims 9 to 12] claim 9,
wherein the raster point distance (D1, D2) of each group
of raster points is equal to the length of the longest
[actual] actually occuring code word for a spectral value
in the corresponding spectral section; and

wherein the length of the longest [actual] actually occur-
ing code word of a spectral section is transmitted as side
information to the bit stream.

15. A method according to [one of the claims 9 to 12] claim 9,
wherein the raster point distance of a group of raster
points is so determined as to be equal to the minimum of
the longest [actual] actually occuring code word of all
the grouped spectral sections and the longest code word of
the code table of this group, and where the longest [ac-
tual] actually occuring code word is transmitted to a de-
coder as side information.

16. A method according to [one of the preceding claims] claim
9, wherein a substantially linear arrangement of the code
words with frequency is adhered to in the raster of the
bit stream both for the priority code words and for the